


Country of the Week: Somalia

Bordered by both the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, Somalia wraps around the Horn of Africa with the longest coastline of any African nation. For this reason, Somalia holds an ancient history of commerce and exploration that dates back centuries.

The country's extensive history creates a diverse culture comprised of lively fish markets, glistening beaches, and agricultural communities. Yet Somalia's diverse past also contributes to a climate of instability. That's why the work of YALI Network members like you makes all the difference in shaping a bright future for the Somali people.


From health rights to women's rights to climate change advocacy, read inspiring member stories below, and you'll see why Somalia is this week's #CountryoftheWeek!

Our first featured YALI Network member, Dr. Shakuur Mohamed, comes from Hargeisa. As a  health rights activist and former health researcher, he brings much needed assistance to the country's less accessible regions.

Determined to positively influence his home nation, he co-founded Lifeline Care (LLC), the first home health service provider in Somaliland and Somalia. Yet his mission to expand his work and "impact change at the global level" is why Dr. Mohamed values the YALI Network.


"This network shares daily inspiration, suggestions, and personal testimonials from YALI members' experiences and successes," he says. Dr. Mohamed gained valuable communication skills through the YALI Network blog and resources, which help amplify his medical efforts.

With great passion, Dr. Mohamed emphasizes he is not the only driven Somali, saying, "In Somaliland there are dedicated young professionals who are enthusiastic about participating in youth collaborative efforts among the region and the continent as a whole."

Our next featured member, [Abdishakur Ahmed](#), also lives in Hargeisa, where he founded a  renewable energy company called [SomLite](#). He explains that "SomLite is a social enterprise organization that makes high-quality solar lighting accessible and affordable to rural Somalis."

Abdishakur started the company in 2014, and the organization's efforts have "distributed over 3,000 solar lamps and home kits to off-grid communities across Somaliland." His efforts embody the YALI Network values of leadership and social impact, and in addition to providing an important resource to his community, SomLite employs Somalis living in remote areas. "Our regional networks of sales agents have created employment in rural villages, and allowed us to reach those who will benefit the most from solar technology," he says.

Interested in climate change, business, and entrepreneurship, Abdishakur admires the work of YALI members and greatly appreciates the Network.

Muna Omer, a participant in the Regional Leadership Center in Kenya, is a "blogger, social  activist, and cultural advocate" living in Hargeisa. Our final YALI Network member, she works to improve the rights of women and girls through civic engagement and writing.

Muna has authored two books, and her fiction and nonfiction stories connect with young readers, especially females. "In my writings, I address issues related to the problems of Qat consumption, tribalism, gender and social inequalities, violence, and youth immigration as the primary challenges of Somali society."

She believes that providing literacy support is a fundamental component to improving human rights across the country. "I am the Chairperson of a reading club called Hiil-Qalin meaning 'Support the PEN!' As a team, we do activities like book launching, debates, discussions, and campaigns on promoting reading and protecting intellectual rights," she explains. Muna also works with the Hargeisa Cultural Center to host a book fair, which aims to promote culture and foster writing skills.

Through her efforts, Muna is deeply engaged with the empowerment of Somali women. "I advocate for the eradication of negative norms facing women like rape, FGM, early marriage, and general abuse." She continues to organize meetings and conferences and urges hundreds of youth to join the YALI Network.
